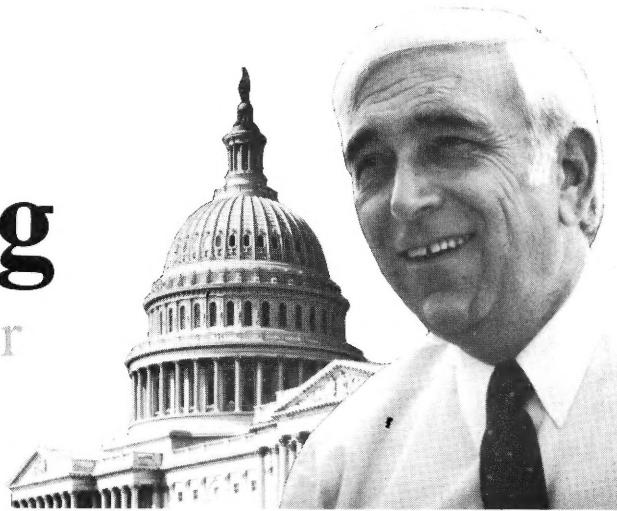


Frank
Lautenberg
United States Senator
for New Jersey



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**Lautenberg Auto Theft Bill Targets Manufacturers;
Toughens Enforcement, Tightens Export Controls**

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY -- Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg (D-N.J.) announced that he is introducing comprehensive federal legislation to combat auto theft by making cars more theft resistant, increasing car theft penalties, tightening export controls, and strengthening State and local efforts to fight vehicle theft.

Lautenberg made his announcement at a news conference in Newark with members of the Essex/Union Counties Auto Theft Task Force, including Union County Prosecutor Drew Routolo, Essex County Prosecutor Jim Mulvihill, Task Force Coordinator Tom DiCastro and other law enforcement officials.

"You don't have to read crime statistics to know that auto theft is out of control," Lautenberg said. "You just have to talk to your friends and neighbors. Just about everyone knows someone who's been a victim of this terrible crime."

"Now we're seeing a more violent method of stealing cars -- carjacking at gunpoint, where people are given the choice of surrendering their cars or getting killed."

"Well, we're sick of it. We've had enough. And it's time to fight back. Not only by toughening penalties and strengthening law enforcement. But also by requiring manufacturers to make cars harder to steal, and fostering constructive mentoring relationships to get these kids off the streets and back on the right path."

The primary components of the Lautenberg bill are:

Theft Resistance

- * Prohibit auto manufacturers from including any steering column that is not reinforced to reduce the risk of theft.
- * Allow the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to prohibit use of any vehicle component that would physically

facilitate vehicle theft, and create an unreasonable risk of such theft.

Tougher Penalties

- * Create a new federal crime of carjacking punishable by up to 20 years in prison.
- * Raise the maximum penalty for importing or exporting stolen cars, and for possession of a stolen vehicle that has been transported interstate, from 5 to 10 years.

Tighten Export Controls

- * Toughen existing regulations regarding Customs inspections of exported cars.

Aid to State/Local Anti-Theft Efforts

- * \$25 million grant program to assist State and local anti-auto theft efforts.
- * Funds may be used for law enforcement task forces, enhanced prosecution of vehicle theft, theft prevention programs, and public awareness efforts.

Mentoring program

- * Includes the Juvenile Mentoring Program Act (JUMP), previously introduced by Senator Lautenberg, to link law enforcement officers with children in high crime areas.

Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Act

- * Voluntary program under which vehicle owners may sign consent forms and get decals for cars that allow law enforcement officers to stop cars operated during certain hours (typically late at night). Previously introduced by Senator Lautenberg, pending in comprehensive crime bill.

"There's no one solution to stopping car theft. We need to fight this battle on all fronts," Lautenberg concluded.

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